

John 6. die 11. 1689

Resolved

That the Thanks of this House be  
given to Mr. Wake for the Ser-  
mon he Preached before the House  
And that the same be ordered to be printed

# S E R M O N

BEFORE THE

House of Commons  
the Desires of the House accordingly

Printed by

W. Dorr. Com.

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*Jovis 6<sup>o</sup> die Junii 1689*

*Resolved,*

**T**Hat the Thanks of this House be given to Mr. *Wake* for the Sermon he Preached before them yesterday; And that he be desired to Print the same.

*Ordered,*

**T**Hat Mr. *Grey* do give him the Thanks, and acquaint him with the Desires of this House accordingly.

*Paul Jodrell.*

---

*Cl. Dom. Com.*

---

016

A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the  
Honourable House of Commons,  
A T

St. MARGARET'S WESTMINSTER

June 5th. 1689.

Being

The F A S T D A Y

Appointed by the

KING and QUEEN's Proclamation,

T O

Implore the Blessing of Almighty God upon their  
MAJESTIES Forces by Sea and Land, and  
Success in the War, now declared, against the  
FRENCH KING.

---

By WILLIAM WAKE, Chaplain in Ordinary to  
their MAJESTIES, and Preacher to the Honourable  
Society of *Gray's Inn*.

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for *Wit. Chiswell* at the *Rose and Crown* in *St. Paul's*  
Church-yard, and *William Rogers* at the *Sun* over against  
*St. Dunstan's Church* in *Fleet street*. 1689.

# SEPMON

Honorable House of Commons  
Presented to the

January 1882

## THE FAST DAY

Appointed by the  
King and Queen's Proclamation

And in the Morning of Saturday, God upon high  
The Lord of Hosts, our God, and Lord, and  
Father, in the Word, be with us, Amen.

By Appointment to the House of Commons  
J. H. B. Esq. Secretary

Printed by J. H. B. Esq. Secretary  
at the Office of the Secretary of the House of Commons  
No. 11, St. James's Street, London, W.



## JOEL, II. 12, 13.

*Therefore also now saith the LORD, Turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with Fasting, and with Weeping, and with Mourning.*

*And rent your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God, for He is Gracious and Merciful, slow to Anger and of great Kindness, and repenteth Him of the Evil.*

**T**Hough the time of this Prophecy be uncertain, so that neither the Jewish Rabbins, nor Christian Antiquaries are able to give us any tolerable account of it, yet is the Design plain, and the words of my Text a most proper and pathetick\* enforcement of the Great duty of this day, to turn unto the Lord our God with all our Heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning, — for he is Gracious and Merciful, slow to Anger and of great Kindness, and repenteth him of the Evil.

If we look into the foregoing Chapter, we shall there find an astonishing Account of the great Evils that were just ready to befall the *Jewes* for their Sins. But that which is yet more surprising, is, That though all this was about to come upon them, yet were they nevertheless *insensible* of their *danger*, nor took any the least care to prevent their utter desolation.

To awaken a stupid and inconsiderate People, a Nation dead in Sin and Security, in the beginning of this Chapter he prepares a lofty and magnificent Scene. He sets before them a Prophecy of yet greater dangers than any they had hitherto experimented, and that in a manner so unusual, with such a Pomp of Words, and in such Triumphant Expressions, as carry a terror even in the Repetition of them.

Joel II. 1.

Blow ye the Trumpet in Zion, sound an Alarm in my holy Mountain; Let all the Inhabitants of the Land tremble, for the day of the LORD cometh; for it is nigh at hand: A day of darkness and of gloominess; a day of Clouds and of thick darkness; as the Morning spread upon the Mountains; a great People and a strong, there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it. A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burneth: The Land is as the Garden

den of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness. The Earth shall quake before them; the Heavens shall tremble; the Sun and the Moon shall be dark; and the Stars shall withdraw their shining. — 10.

Whatever be the Import of these Phrases; whether by the mighty and terrible Host here spoken of, we are only to understand that swarm of

(a) Locusts, and other Insects, that we are (b) before told were utterly to devour all the Fruits of the Land: Or whether under the Character of these, we shall (c) with most Interpreters, comprehend the numerous and mighty Armies of the Chaldeans and Babylonians, which at divers times brought such Desolations, as we read of, upon the Jews: This is plain, that we have here the denunciation of some Judgment worthy of God, and great as the sins and incorrigibleness that occasion'd it.

And now, who would not here expect the final desolation of such a People as this? But behold, God even yet in his Anger remembers Mercy; and tho they had hitherto neglected all the Calls and Invitations of his holy Prophets to Repentance, yet He resolves once more to try, whether they would now at least in their dangers hearken to his

(a) *Judaei putant in diebus Joel tam innumerabilem Locustarum super judaam venisse multitudinem, ut cuncta complerent, & non dicam fruges, sed ne vinearum quidem & arborum Cortices, ramosque dimitterent, ita ut omni virore consumpto avenes arborum rami, & sicca vinearum flagella remanerent.* Hieron. in Joel I. v. 6.  
(b) Ch. I. 4.  
(c) See among the Ancients, St. Hierome. loc. cit. Drusinus in Joel I. 1. Gratius in Joel I. 5. Theodoret in Cap. 1. 4.

Ἰσὺς μὲν ἐν ταῦτα τρεπόμενος, εἰς τὴν Ἀσσύριον καὶ Βαβυλωνίαν ἐξελήξατο — ἕως δὲ ἀλυσθῆναι αὐτὸν ἔμελλεν, ὑπολαμβάνων δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐν τῷ ἑλθόντι νόμῳ τὴν οὐρανίου γαλήνης. v. pl.

Ad-

וְעַתָּה  
ver. 12.

Admonitions: He raises up *Joel* at once both to set before them his Judgments, if they continu'd still *impenitent*; and to encourage them, by *repenting*, not only to prevent their Ruine, but to assure themselves of his Favour. That though they had so long neglected him, yet if they would (c) *now*, even now at the last, return with a true Zeal, and a sincere Affection to their Duty, they should not fail to meet with a favourable acceptance from him:

Therefore also now saith the LORD, Turn ye even to me, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rent your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

It is not my intention to seek a Parallel of all this, either in the *sin*, or in the *danger* of our own Country. I would willingly hope, that neither our *Guilt*, nor our *Incorrigibleness* have been so heinous as theirs, nor shall any such deplorable Judgment as this, ever, I trust, be made the punishment of what our Iniquities have indeed but too justly deserved. No, blessed be God, who by a wonderful Concurrence of great and singular Mercies,

cies, seems rather to call upon us to celebrate his Goodness, than to deprecate his Judgments ; to praise his Name in *Hymns* of Triumph and Eucharist, than to *weep between the Porch and the Altar*, in melancholly *Litanies* to avert his Anger, and implore his Mercy. But yet since the *Goodness*, as well as *Judgments* of the Lord, are designed to bring us to *repentance*, and that whether we look back into our own particular Actions, or consider those Publick and National Transgressions, whereby we have so long and loudly call'd to Heaven for vengeance ; we must with shame and indignation confess our selves some of the greatest of Sinners ; I cannot but think, both the Solemn Occasion of *this Day*, and the Design of my *Text*, to be a most proper and seasonable Admonition to us, to *turn unto the Lord our God*, and to implore his Blessing upon our present Enterprises, that those vile *Insects*, the *Locusts* and *Caterpillars*, that have so barbarously consumed our Neighbours round about us ; our worse than *Assyrian* or *Babylonian* Enemies, may not be able to prevail against us.

And indeed, however it has pleased God, as at this time, to give us some Encouragement to *trust in his Mercy* ; yet we cannot so soon forget,

B

that

that we have also born the *punishment* of our *sins*. For not to repass upon the things that are at a greater distance from us; let the Instances still fresh in all our Memories, speak to us: What just Apprehensions did we but very lately lie under of our *Lives*, and of what is yet dearer to us than our *Lives*, our *Liberty*, and our *Religion*? How did our Enemies not only project our Ruin, but as, if it were already accomplished, begin to say in their hearts, nay, they began freely to speak it out to us; *Aha! so would we have it: Persecute them, and take them; for there is none to deliver them.*

And if now we are no longer exposed to those dangers that *so lately* threatned us; if God has begun, upon our late more serious Concern for Religion, and more general return to him, to give us some Testimony of his gracious Designations towards us; This certainly ought to be so far from lessening our *solemn Humiliation* at this time, that it should rather engage us to be the more forward in perfecting our *Repentance*, the greater Encouragement we have to hope, that it shall be accepted at our hands. And I must now beg leave, with so much the more Earnestness, to enforce the *Duty* of my *Text*:

There

*Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:*

*And rent your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God.*

By how much I hope I may with the greater assurance propose to you the *Promise* of it for your Encouragement:

*For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.*

I have already pointed out to you the two great parts of my *Text*; and which must therefore be the Subject of my Discourse upon it; *viz.*

I. The Address of the Holy Prophet to his Country, and in that the *Exhortation*; which I am earnestly in the Name of God to recommend unto you this day;

*To turn unto the LORD your God with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning.*

II. The great *Encouragement* which he offer'd to induce them, and which ought to be of no less a force to stir up all of us to a serious and diligent performance of it.



*For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.*

I begin with the *former* of these, the *Exhortation* of my Text :

- I. *To turn unto the LORD your God with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning.*

And here I presume I shall not need to tell you, That all this is but a larger Paraphrase of what I may in other Words call a *General* and *National Repentance*, of those *Publick* and *National Sins* which had provoked *God Almighty* to send down so many Judgments upon them, and to threaten them with yet greater, if they continu'd still in their *Impenitence*. And indeed, what could be more reasonable, than by such a Solemn and Universal Acknowledgment both of the *Evils* they had committed, and of the Judgments which they deserved, and of the *sorrow* they were now touch'd with for their Offences, to appease *God's Anger* for that *General Incorrigibleness*, by which they had so long exposed both his *Goodness* and his *Justice* to Contempt, among the *Heathen* round about him ?

For

For however it be very certain, that all the outward pomp and solemnity of Repentance, the fasting, and the weeping, and the mourning, are at best but a form of Godliness, empty and unprofitable, unless there be also added to these that true and inward change of Mind, in which alone consists the Power of it; yet there may be such Circumstances and Cases put, wherein this Duty must pass beyond the Heart and the Closet, and the Humiliation will be imperfect, if it be not as publickly set forth to the Eyes of Men, as it is sincerely perform'd in the sight of God.

And such especially must be the Repentance for National Sins. Where Mens Transgressions have been open and notorious, there their Return also must be no less Solemn and Evident; that so the Honour as well as Justice of God may be vindicated in their Forgiveness; and some sort of Reparation made not only for the Guilt which they have contracted, but also for the Scandal which they have given to his Honour and Religion in the World.

Now 'tis this which at once both declares the Piety, and commands the publick Humiliation of THIS DAY.

(c) ἵνα ἔν μὴ πένον ἁπομει-  
ναντες νουθεσίας  
ἐκπορεύωμεν τὸ  
σῶμα καὶ νου-  
θεσίας, καὶ δυν-  
αμὶς καὶ  
DAY. (c) And for the due discharge whereof, I must  
intreat you to go along with me in these following  
Reflections.

ἵνα τρέπον τὸ πρῶτον μαρτυρήσῃ. Chryf. Hom. ad pop. Antioch. 3.

1<sup>st</sup>. That though, as I have just now shewn, there must be the *publick marks* of *Sorrow* and *Humiliation* in our *publick Repentance*, yet we must by no means stop in these; nor think that this is all that God requires of us in order to our forgiveness.

This was indeed the *Vanity* of the *Jews* heretofore, and is too much the folly of some misguided *Christians* now. Their *Indignation* against their *Sins*, and against themselves for having committed them, was spent especially in the outward appearance of sorrow. *They rent their Cloaths; and put on sackcloth; they wept, and fasted and went softly; and then they supposed they had done their business; though it may be their Souls were not yet Humbled; nor their Hearts at all broken with any true Contrition for their Sins.*

2 Sam. iii. 31.

1 King. xxi.  
27.

And so among those of the Church of *Rome* at this day. If we may believe some of their greatest *Casuists*, an *external Worship* is sufficient to carry a man to Heaven, without the trouble of the

the true inward Devotion of the Soul : He may repent without Contrition ; may fast with a full Meal : Nay, and if the Pope pleases, (d) may obtain a plenary remission of his Sins, *se ancho non fosse confesso ne contrito* ; though he has neither confess'd them to any Priest, nor finds in his own Heart any manner of Contrition for them.

(d) This Passage is so very Extraordinary, that I ought to give some Account of it. Pope Boniface IX. having grant-

ed a large Indulgence at Rome, whether the Lombards, by reason of the Wars they then had, could not go to gain it, at the Prayer of John Galeas, Visconte of Milan he grants the same Indulgence to Milan he had done at Rome, viz. that all the Subjects of the said Galeas, though they had neither Confess'd their Sins, nor were Contrite for them, should yet be absolved of all their Sins ; only for visiting a few Churches, and paying the Sum of Money prefix'd by the said Bull : — Cioè (says their own Historion) che Ciasciascuno nel dominio del Visconte, se ancho non fosse contrito, ne Confesso, fosse assoluto di ogni peccato. Bern. Corio nella sua Hist. di Milan. terza part. pag. 629. Ed. Venet. 1565.

I shall not need to say how many new ways of Salvation of this kind they have found out ; by wearing a Leathern Girdle about their Loins, or Scapularies over their Shoulders ; by lifting themselves into such or such certain Fraternities ; by dressing of Altars, and going on Pilgrimages ; by Holy Water, and Agnus dei's : And all which, and infinite more of the like kind, if, as our late Masters tell us, they are not Authorized by their Church, yet I am sure are publicly Recommended by their Greatest Men, and generally practis'd too, without any censure or contradiction among them. This is certain, that all these,  
and

See Dr. Bre-  
vints Saul  
and Samuel at  
Endor.  
Crasset devo-  
tion veritable  
envers la Sr.  
Vierge. part.  
ult.

and whatever Artifices of the like kind, Men may please either to flatter themselves, or to delude others withal, without a true *Contrition*, and a serious *Reformation* they are all but *Vanity*; They make a *shew* of *Piety* in the *Eyes* of *Men*, but they avail nothing to our *forgiveness* with *God*.

I will not now dispute of what use some of these *External Performances* may be to assist our *Repentance*, and render our *Sorrow* for *Sin* the more *solemn*, and so in *some Cases*, as I have before observed, the more *pleasing* to *God*. I know well enough that *St. Paul* has told us, that *Bodily Exercise*, where 'tis discreetly order'd, does *profit a little*, though it be not like *Godliness*, *profitable for all things*. But then as 'tis plain, that the greatest part of those *Follies* so much magnified and recommended in the *Church* of *Rome*, are but vain and ridiculous *Impositions* to cheat the silly and superstitious *Multitude*; so 'tis certain that the best of these things are neither in themselves *Meritorious*, much less *Satisfactory* for *Sins*, as they pretend them to be, nor otherwise of any value at all with *God*, than as they are attended with that *true Repentance*, which alone can either incline his *Mercy* or obtain our *Forgiveness*.

If

If we will therefore make our solemn (e) *Humiliation* this day acceptable to God, and available to our selves, our *Country*, and our *Religion*, we must take the *Method* of the *Prophet* in our *Text*: We must turn unto the Lord our God with all our *Heart*, and then our *fasting*, and our *weeping*, and our *Mourning* shall indeed be pleasing unto him. We must rent our *Hearts* and not, i. e. rather than our *Garments*; must humble our *Souls* first, and then the violence we do our *Bodies* will be consider'd by him. When *Jonah* denounced Gods Judgments against *Niniveh*, we read in his 3<sup>d</sup>. Chapter, That the *People* of *Niniveh* believed, and *Proclaimed* a fast, and put on *Sackcloth*, from the greatest of them even unto the least. (f) But was this therefore that *Repentance* for which he spared them? No, it is not so much as once mentioned among the *Reasons* of it. It was the *Reformation* of their *Lives* that tied up his *Hand*, and sheathed his *Sword*, ver. 10. And God saw their Works, that they turn'd from their *Evil way*; and God repented of the *Evil* that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not.

(e) *Nhselan* ἡ ταύτην λέγω τὴν πᾶσαν πέναν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀκριβῆς *nhselan*, ἡ τὴν πᾶσαν βραμύαν, ἀπὸ τοῦ μόνου, ἀλλὰ τὴν πᾶσαν ἀμαρτανίαν.  
Chryl. Hom. ad Antioch. 3.

(f) Ἀλλ' ἡ ταύτην ἢ ποτὲ ἐστὶ τὸ λῦσαι τὴν ἀσφαλιστὴν ἐκείνην ὀργάνω; ἀεὶ ἡ *nhsela* μόνον καὶ ὁ σάκος; ἢ καὶ ἐστὶν εἰπεῖν· ἀλλ' ἢ παντὸς τοῦ βίου μεταβολὴ πᾶσιν ἑαυτοῦ δόλῳ, ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν περὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ὀργάνω, ὅτι καὶ τὸ ὀργάνω τὸ δὲ διαλῦσαι καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων *nhsela* αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν τὴν πᾶσαν ἀμαρτανίαν, καὶ τὸ κατὰ τὴν ὀργάνω τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς διδασκαλίας, ὅτι καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς. Καὶ εἰδὲ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν ὁ δεῖν ἔργα ποιεῖν; ὅτι ἐνῆσαν; ὅτι σάκος ἀμαρτανίαν; ἢ δὲν τὰ ταῦτα, ἀλλὰ πάντα ταῦτα σγῆσαι, ἐπὶ τὴν ὀργάνω. ὅτι ἀπὸ τῆς πᾶς ἐκείνης αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς πᾶς πᾶσιν, καὶ μετεποίησεν ὅτι τὴν κακίαν ἢ ἀμαρτανίαν αὐτοῦ, ὅτι καὶ τὸ δὲ καὶ ὅτι ἡ *nhsela* ἐξήρασε τὸ κακὸν αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἡ μεταβολὴ τὸ βίον τὸν δεῖν κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ τοῖς βραμύαν καὶ εὐμενῇ, &c. Chryl. ad Antioch. Hom. 3.

C

2. And

2. And this brings me to a second Remark for the farther clearing of this great Duty; viz. That not only these *outward marks* of *penitence* are not sufficient to the discharge of it, but though we should to these add a *true and real sorrow of heart* for the Sins we have committed, even this would not be sufficient to purchase our forgiveness.

Now by *true sorrow*, I do not mean that little *imperfect sorrow*, which looks rather to the danger of our Condition, than to the heinousness of our Offences; and bewails our Transgressions more out of an apprehension of those Judgments that may be the Consequence of them, than out of any real regret that we have sinned against a most Gracious and Merciful God. For however those of the other *Communion*, out of their great tenderness to Sinners, have declared such a *sorrow* as this, if accompanied with *Confession*, to be sufficient for Mens Salvation; and therefore have resolved, that *true Contrition* or a *sorrow for sin committed*, with a purpose of sinning no more, is not necessary to the Sacrament of Penance, after the Commission of mortal Sin, but that *Attrition* is sufficient, though a Man knows it to be no more; Yet I suppose it needless in this place to obviate



obviate any such *gross Error*, however otherwise of very great danger, in the Practice of this Duty. Be the *sorrow for sin* never so sincere; and our *Resolutions* thereupon no more to return to the Commission of it never so firm and well grounded, yet if instead of making good these Resolutions we shall stop here, we are but half Penitents; we yet want that change of life, which alone is able to compleat the Nature, and render the Practice of our Repentance acceptable unto God, and available to our forgiveness.

3. In short, thirdly, if we will truly discharge that *Repentance*, to which we are here called, we must do it not by being *sorry* for our Sins, or by *resolving* against them, but by an effectual *forsaking* of them; i. e. as our Text speaks, *By turning unto the Lord our God*. This is that which alone can implore his Favour, and commend us to his Mercy. And this was what I before observed in the *Case of Niniveh*: *When God saw their works that they turned from their Evil way*, then he repented him of the Evil that he had said he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Nay, but it is not any turning unto God that will suffice neither: We must turn\* even unto him, \* Veraciter integraliter. Lyr. Mercer.

†Revera, Ex  
animo, non  
simulatè.  
Druſ. ſerîo  
ac bonâ fide.  
Grot.

and with all our † Heart: Words very Emphatical, and which offer to us two great Conditions, which are absolutely necessary to render our Conversion every way such as it ought to be. *First*, That it must be hearty and sincere: There must be nothing of the Hypocrite mix'd with it; our Souls must go along with our outward Performances; and these penitential appearances be the true Declarations of that real inward sorrow which we feel in our Hearts for our Offences. For God is not a Man that he should be mocked. He sees into our very Souls, and knows the secrets of all the Children of Men. And *Secondly*, That it must be intire and without reserve: As we must be sorry for every Sin we have already committed, so we must resolve against ever committing any for the time to come; For God is of purer Eyes than to behold the least Iniquity; and if our Repentance be sincere, so shall we be too. The same Piety which moves us to hate any Evil, will equally fill us with an Aversion against all. And if we desire to continue but in one Offence, it is because that we do truly repent of none.

So that now then if we will answer the design of this day: if we will render our fast such as the Lord has chosen, and has promised to reward with the

Pſal. xlv. 21.  
1 Chron.  
xxviii. 9.  
Rom. viii. 27.

Habac. i. 13.

the *Blessings* both of *this life*, and of that which is to come; we must not think it enough that we comply with the outward Ceremonies and shew of *Repentance*, but we must indeed resolve to bring forth the fruits of it. Whilst we Address our selves to God for Pardon, we must take heed to dispose our Souls in such a manner, that we may be fit to receive it.

And if we thus improve the great Solemnity of *this day*, we shall not fail to meet with a favourable acceptance at the *Throne of Grace*. *God* Joel. ii. 18. will be jealous for his land, and pity his People: He will perfect the great Deliverance he has begun for us, and once more render us the fear and the Deut. ii. 25. terror of all our Enemies round about us. Our Faith which has so often triumph'd over all the Arguments of its Adversaries, shall now no less triumph over all their black Designs to root it out and to destroy it; and shew to all the World, that though for our Tryal God may sometimes permit the *Winds to blow*, and the *Floods to rise*, and the *Storms to beat against our Church*, yet has he founded it on that *Rock* that shall never fail; Nor Matt. xvi. 18. shall the gates of Hell, either the Power of France or the Cunning of the Jesuit, or the Malice of Both, ever be able to prevail against it.

And

And this brings me to the other thing I am to speak to: Our *Encouragement* to this *Duty*.

II. *For God is Gracious and Merciful, slow to anger and of great Kindness, and repenteth him of the Evil.*

It is not at all needful for me to enter on any particular *Explication* of all these Gracious *Attributes*, and shew what *Arguments* every one of them affords to engage us to *Repentance*. Two things in *General* there are, which will at first sight arise from them to excite us to it, viz.

1<sup>st</sup> The *Goodness* and *Mercy* of God to the greatest *Sinners* upon their *Repentance*.

*God is Gracious and Merciful, and of great Kindness.*

2<sup>dly</sup> His *unwillingness* to pronounce any *Judgments* at all against them, and his readiness to *renew* them, if they *repent*.

*He is slow to Anger, and Repenteth him of the Evil.*

And

And 1<sup>st</sup> Of the *Goodness* and *Mercy* of God to  
the *Greatest* of *Sinners* upon their *Repentance*.

*He is Gracious and Merciful and of great  
Kindness.*

When God Proclaimed his own Name in the  
midst of the People of *Israel*, we read in the  
xxxiv. of *Exodus*, that he chose to do it not so  
much in the terrible Attributes of his *Majesty* and  
*Power*, as in the soft *Idea's* of his *Mercy* and *Good-  
ness*, *The Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gra-  
cious, long-suffering and abundant in Goodness and* Exod. xxxiv.  
6, 7.  
*truth; keeping Mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity,  
and transgression, and sin.* And if we look into all  
the following Representations which he makes of  
himself, whether by his *Holy Prophets* under the *Le-  
gal*, but especially by our *Blessed Saviour* and his  
*Apostles* under the *Christian Dispensation*, we shall find  
there is no *Character* he so much delights in as this  
of being *Good and Gracious*, not willing that any  
should perish, but that all should come to *Repentance*;  
2 Peter iii. 8.

And now what more forcible Encouragement  
can any one desire to bring him to *Repentance*,  
than to be thus assured of the *Goodness* and *Mercy*  
of

of God to the greatest of Sinners, if they Repent? That he will not only forgive him upon his return, but will even assist him with *Grace and Strength in the doing of it*. That he desires not the death of the most Profligate Offender, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. In a word, That he has promised forgiveness, without exception, to the most wicked Men upon their Repentance; so that if they will but yet break off their evil Course, and keep his Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, they shall surely live, they shall not dye. Ezek. xviii. 21.

Many are the ways, and excellent the Methods that God has taken to convince us of his Mercy, and the time would fail me to enter on a particular Consideration of them.

Sometimes he declares not only that he is ready to pardon us if we repent, but that he even desires we should repent that he may forgive us. And least his Word should not be sufficient, he confirms that desire with an Oath, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the Wicked; but that the Wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye from your Evil ways, for why will ye die O House of Israel?*

Sometimes

Sometimes he *Expostulates* with us in the way of Reasoning, to see if by that means he may be able to bring us to consider his Love and Affection to us. *Isai. i. 16. Wash ye; make ye clean, put away the Evil of your doings from before mine Eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well. — 16.*  
*Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Tho your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow; though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wooll. — 17. — 18.*

If he *Exhorts* us to Repentance, he always does it upon this Promise, that he will Pardon us if we repent. *If we turn from our Sins, Iniquity shall not be our ruine. Ezek. xviii. 30.*

If he threatens Judgments, yet still he keeps a reserve for Mercy to triumph over Judgment; and will rather be thought inconstant in his most Peremptory Decrees, than inexorable to Repenting Sinners. Thus he commanded *Jonah* to go to *Niniveh*, and to pronounce an utter destruction against it. He fix'd the very time too, *Let four days and Niniveh shall be overthrown. But what now was the issue of all this? Why, the City believed, and feared God, and turn'd from their Evil way: And God repented of the Evil that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not. Jonah. iii. 4. — 10.*



And what must the Consequence of all these *Reflections* be, but to engage us not to dispise the Goodness of God, whereby he thus Graciously invites us to *Repentance*; but to conclude with Holy David, Psal.cxxx. 3. *If thou LORD shouldst be extream to mark what is done amiss, O God who may abide it? But there is Mercy with thee, therefore shalt thou be feared.*

And what I have now said of *Gods mercy* in General, will yet more hold in the other Part of this *Character*, wherein is set out to us in Particular.

*Secondly*, his great unwillingness to pronounce any *Judgments* at all against *Sinners*, and his readines to recal them upon their *Repentance*.

*He is slow to anger, and repenteth him of the Evil.*

And because I would now, were I able, speak not so much to your *Reason*, as to your *Sense* and *Experience*, to your *Consciences* and *Affections*; I will for the Proof of this no more lead you back to the *Israelites* in this *Prophecy*; to *Past-times*, and unknown *Countries*; but will rather desire you to consider your own *Times*, your own *Country*,  
and

and if you will allow me freely to add it, your own Souls. Which of all these will not afford me an *evident Demonstration* of the *Patience* and *long-suffering* of God? And speak him in the words of the *Text*, to be a God *slow to anger*, and *that repenteth him of the Evil*?

That after so many *Sins*, as we have every one, the very best of us *committed*, we are yet alive this day, whereas God might, if he had pleased, long since have cut us off in the *midst* of our *Sins*: That after so many calls and invitations as he has sent to bring us to *Repentance*, he is still pleased to call and to invite us to it: That notwithstanding we have so far abused his *Goodness* and *long-suffering*, as to improve that which above all things should have the most engaged us to our Duty, into an encouragement to go on the rather in our *Sins*; he nevertheless still continues to us the Offers of *Pardon* and *Peace*, if we will even now in this our day consider the things that make for our *Peace*: What is all this but a most *Demonstrative*, as well as a most *Affectionate* Proof, that God is indeed *slow to anger*, not willing that any should *perish*, but that all should come to *Repentance*?

That he has deliver'd us out of so many dangers, in which, but for his *Providence* over us we must long since have perish'd : That he has smitten us in *Mercy*, not in *Judgment* ; to correct and admonish, not to ruine and destroy us : That upon our deprecating his *Anger*, he has at any time heard our Prayers, and answer'd our Desires : What is this but a plain Evidence

Lam. iii. 33.

*that he smites not willingly, nor loves to afflict the Children of Men : and so is a God repenting him of the Evil that he is at any time forced either to threaten us with, or to bring upon us.*

And if we look into his Dispensations towards us in the common concern of our Country and our Religion ; How *slow* must that God have been to *Anger*, who after so many years Attendance, nevertheless still calls upon us, as at *this day*, to

Ezek. xviii.  
30.

*turn from our Evil way, and from the violence that is in our Hands, that our Iniquity may not be our ruine ?*

And for his *repenting him of the Evil*, which we have sometimes forced him by our continual Provocations to send upon us : Let the *Instances* which we our selves have known suffice to tell us, how unwilling he has shewn himself to bring us to an utter delolation.

When

When it pleased God for our iniquities, to despise, in his indignation, both the King and the Priest; Lam. ii. 6. and by the deplorable Judgment of Civil Confusions, had proved and exercised us about Twenty Years; with what a Miracle of Mercy did he Psal. cxxvi. 1. turn again the Captivity of Sion, and restore to us both our Government and Religion, as before?

When this would not do, but our Sins and our Prosperity return'd together; so that we were again in a very few years become ripe for judgment; He called forth a *destroying Angel*; He put a new Sword into his Hand, and commanded him to slay his *Thousands* and *Ten Thousands* in our Streets. The PLAGUE consum'd our Strength, and hardly was that pass'd, when another Vengeance, a *devouring FIRE*, such as scarce any Age or Country has ever heard of, burnt down our Dwellings. And had not the Hand of God wonderfully interposed, we must have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Isaiah i. 9. Gomorrah.

And yet how did he then cover us with his hand in that day of his displeasure? He neither suffer'd our Enemies to invade us from abroad, nor any Domestick Quarrels to embroil us at home.

home. He preserv'd us in Peace ; he sent again the Blessings of Plenty and Prosperity among us, and our City is risen more Great and Glorious out of its Ashes.

What shall I say to the *fears* and *jealousies* we have labour'd under since, from a restless Party, Enemies to the Name of *Protestant*, and by *Principle* conjured, if they can, to root it out of the World ?

In how many *dangers* has God deliver'd us ? And how many Designs, for ought we know, may he have prevented, which have not yet been brought to light ? And when at last, either to awaken us the more effectually to a *Repentance* of our *sins*, or it may be to accomplish the number of their *Iniquities*, he deliver'd us over for a little while into the hands of our Enemies ; and to convince the most incredulous among us, what the true *Spirit* of *prevailing Popery* is, suffer'd them with such an inconsiderate Fury to pursue our Ruine, that no Ties, either of God or Man, were sufficient to restrain them ; but all Obligations, whether of *Justice* or *Conscience*, were equally trampled under their feet : How did it then please our *Almighty Defender* to assert his *Character* of being a God *repenting him of the evil* that he had brought

brought upon us, in a manner that is the *Wonder* and *Astonishment* of the present, and, that I am perswaded, shall be the *Praise* and *Triumph* of his *Church* in all succeeding *Generations*?

He raised us up a *Deliverer* out of the *House* of his *Servant David*. He touch'd his *Princely Heart* with a *Generous Sense* both of the *Evils* which we had suffer'd, and of the greater that we apprehended. His *Honour* and his *Zeal* enflamed him to do somewhat worthy Himself; and that might answer the mighty *Hopes* God had prepared us to conceive of Him. He meditated the great *Work* of delivering our *Countrey* from *Oppression*, and our *Religion* from *Destruction*. And by the *Blessing* of God, he accomplish'd it, in a manner, so extraordinary in all its *Circumstances*, as, I think, should not suffer us to doubt from whose *Providence* it was, that this *Redemption* was sent to us. This *was the Lord's doing*, and, whatever it is, I am sure ought to be, *marvellous in our Eyes*: And may, I think, be a *final*, I hope it shall be an *effectual* Confirmation to us of this *Great Engagement* of our *Text*, to turn to him with all our hearts; viz. That he is a God *repenting him of the evil*; and therefore whose *Mercy*, if we now truly

truly do so, we may securely depend upon both for the *forgiveness* of our *sins*, and for our *deliverance* from those *dangers* which our *sins* have so justly expos'd us to.

And now what remains, but that having all these great Encouragements, such *Promises*, or rather, such an *Earnest* of God's Favour to us, we resolve, every one of us, seriously to comply with the great Design both of this *Day* and of this *Discourse*; and by our sincere *Repentance* for our past Offences, obtain that Blessing we so much desire both for our *Countrey*, and for our *Religion*.

Never was there a *time* wherein we had greater Reason to hope for God's Acceptance than at this *Day*; and such an *Occasion* as this, to implore his Favour, there may not perhaps again occur in the Course of many Ages.

For indeed what is it that we are now assembled to recommend to His Mercy, but in Effect the preservation of our *Selves*, our *Laws*, our *Liberties*, and our *Religion*, against the Violence of those who have long conspired both *Their* and *Our* destruction.

That



That he would *preside* in our *Councils*, and go forth with our *Armies*; and so direct the one, and prosper the other, that we may again enjoy the Blessings of Peace and Security; that there may be no decay, no leading into *Captivity*, and no just complaining in our Streets. Psal. cxliv. 14.

And this he will do, if we be not our selves wanting to our own preservation. Only let us act as becomes *Good Christians*, and *True Englishmen*; let us do all things for the Glory of God, and for the Safety, Honour, and Welfare of our Country: In the words of *Joab* to his Brother *Alishai*, upon an Occasion not much different from our own at this time; *Let us be strong, and of good Courage, and let us play the Men for our People, and for the Cities of our God*; and then he will not fail us, nor forsake us. 2 Sam. x. 12.

But if instead of pursuing the things that make for our Peace, we shall still go on to precipitate our own destruction: If when we are call'd this Day to turn unto the LORD our God with all our hearts, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; we shall instead thereof fast only for strife and for debate: Isa. lviii. 4.

E

If

If when we should be here prostrating our selves before the LORD, to implore the Completion of that Great Deliverance he has begun to work for us; we shall, on the contrary, continue ungratefully to murmur against his Providence, and be ready almost to implead his Justice for what he has already done; and with those repining *Israelites* of old, be looking back again to our *Egyptian Bondage*, when we are brought even within prospect of the *Promised Land*: In a word, If when we should be uniting our selves against the *Common Enemy* of our Country and Christendom, we shall suffer a Spirit of Faction and Sedition, of Mutiny and Discontent; of private Interests, and unseasonable Resentments, to distract our Councils, and divide us against one another; What can we then expect, but that God should at last give us over into the hands of our Enemies, and make those that hate us to rule over us.

Wherefore now, arise O ye Worthies, ye Chosen, and Counsellours of our *Israel*; Consult, consider, and resolve: And may the God of Heaven; the God before whom we are here assembled this Day; He who has, and does, and

and we trust *will* still deliver us; our *Rock*, and our *Defence* against the Face of our Enemies, so direct and prosper all your Consultations, that the Children which are yet unborn, may rise up in their Generations, and call you *Blessed*, when they shall enjoy the Benefits of that Peace, that Security, which we trust shall descend to them, through your Wise and Vigorous Resolutions.

Behold this day the Eyes not of your own *Nation* only, but of all the *Nations* round about us, fix'd upon you: The Fortunes, I do not say, of every single Person among you, though that were somewhat; nor of your own Country and Religion only, which ought to be much more valued; but what is yet more considerable, the Fortunes of all the *Reformed Churches*, and *distressed Countries* of *Europe*, depending on the success of our present Enterprizes. This is the fatal *Crisis*, that must secure or ruine both them and us for ever.

May the Consideration of all these things, inspire every one of you with a Spirit suitable to that great Trust that is here committed to you: A Spirit of *Wisdom* and *Understanding*; a Spirit of *Prudence* and *Discretion*; a Spirit of

*Charity and Moderation*; but above all with a *Spirit of Piety and Unity*; that being endu'd with all these excellent Qualities, ye may become the *Repairers* of our *Breaches*; the *Restorers* of our almost lost and trampled *Liberties*; the *Defenders* of our *Faith*; the *Support* of your *Country*; the *Avengers* of your barbarously abus'd *Allies*; the *Scourge* and *Terror* of the *Universal Enemy* of *Truth, Peace, Religion, Nature*: In short, of all the *common Laws* and *Rights* of *God* and of all *Mankind*.

May your *Councils* be Govern'd with such a *Calmness* and *Temper*, as may settle and compose all the unquiet and dissatisfied *Spirits* (if there be any) yet remaining among us; and suffer none to regret our wonderful preservation, but those only whose *fury* had once prompted them to attempt, and whose *Principles* still carry them on, to desire our *Destruction*.

May your *Resolutions* be as *speedy*, as the *publick Necessities* are *pressing*; and their *Execution* be accompanied with a *Fidelity* and *Success* that may equal not only our *Expectation*, but even our very *Hopes* and our *Desires*.

And

And for the accomplishment of all these Blessings; and whatever else may serve to make these Kingdoms Happy.

May We all this day, fast the fast which the Lord has chosen; to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy-burdens, and to let the Oppressed go free.

Let us confess our wickedness, and be sorry for our sins. Psal. xxxviii. 18.

Let us turn to the LORD our God with all our heart; and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning.

Let us deal our Bread to the Hungry, and bring the Poor to our Houses. Isa. lviii. 7.

Then shall we call, and the Lord shall answer; we shall cry, and he shall say here I am. Our light shall break forth as the Morning, and our righteousness as the Noon-day. — 8. — 9.

God shall come, and shall not keep silence: He shall save us from our Enemies, and put them to shame that hate us. Psal. i. 3. Psal. xlv. 7.

He shall arise, and all our Adversaries shall be scatter'd; they also that hate us shall flee before us; Like as the smoke vanisheth, so shall we drive them away; terror and dread shall fall upon them. Psal. Lxviii. 1. Exod. xv. 16.

So

So shall all our Mourning be turned into Laughter, and our Heaviness into Joy, and we shall yet sing the Song of Moses and of the Lamb, when he shall have given us rest from all our Enemies round about us;

Salvation and Glory, and Power, and Praise, and Thanksgiving, be to him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for Ever and Ever. Amen.

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